

# Explore Your Privilege

*Activity*

**Resource:** Ideas for Action

**Grade(s):** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

## What Is it All About?

Many people are unaware of the many privileges that they are born with or grow up with. This activity is an opportunity to explore privilege and the advantages it gives to some, but not all.

## Why Do It?

Checking your privilege is important. Understanding that some people are born, or grow up, with advantages not available to others in order to foster empathy and to motivate people to consider equity in all they do.

## How Do We Do It?

Find a large, open space to use for the race.

Have participants line up at one of the space. Be sure that activity area is clear of obstruction. Remind participants to be aware of their surroundings and to participate safely.

Before you start the race, you will read out different statements. If they apply to a participant, that participant will take 2 steps forward. If it does not apply to a participant, that participant will stay where they are. Read out at least three different statements.

Work with an adult ally to select the statements you will read out to ensure that all participants can feel safe participating. Here are examples of statements that can be used:

Take 2 steps forward if...

- If you grew up with a father figure in the home
- If you have access to a tutor
- If you've never had to worry about your cell phone being shut off
- If you've never had to help your family with the bills
- If you've never wondered where your next meal was going to come from
- If you identify as male
- If you are Caucasian
- If at least one of your parents or caregivers has a Masters degree or higher
- If English is your first language

Before you say "Go!", ask participants to look around. Point out that the statements you read have nothing to do with what participants have done, with decisions they've made. Acknowledge that the participants at the front have a better chance to win the race. It doesn't mean that the people at the back can't race, but we need to recognize that the people at the front have been given a head start.

Encourage participants to reflect on where they stand and to make an effort to learn more about their classmates. The outcome of the race would likely be very different if people started on the same line. Emphasize that while people don't need to feel ashamed of their privilege (whether it's high or low), they do need to be aware of it.

Point out that the race is being used as an analogy for life and as an explanation of privilege.

Say "GO!" and have the participants race.

Have a discussion with participants afterwards to debrief on the activity. How did it make people feel? Do people have any questions or comments about the activity?

## How Do We Get Creative?

Make it a whole school event.

Incorporate this activity into existing events, like Track and Field Day, where participants are already running races.

Adapted from What is Privilege? The Race of Life